

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01

SAM-01 CIEP-01 EB-07 SCCT-01 OPR-02 TRSE-00 COME-00

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R 271418Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2371

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0836

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, LY

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST QADHAFI

REF: CAIRO 7333

1. EGYPTIAN PRESS REPORTS ON SITUATION HERE SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH A SHAKER OF SALT, ESPECIALLY GUMHURRIYAH'S STORY ABOUT A COUP ATTEMPT IN BENGHAZI (REFTEL). EMBOFF WHO WAS IN BENGHAZI JULY 25-26 SAW NO EVIDENCE OF TENSION OR INCREASED SECURITY PRECAUTIONS ANYWHERE, AND THERE WERE NO CHECKPOINTS ON ROAD LEADING TO AIRPORT AND MILITARY CAMP OUTSIDE CITY. IN SHORT, SITUATION IN BENGHAZI DOES NOT APPEAR TO NEED BRINGING UNDER CONTROL, AND RCC MEMBER KHUWAYLDI AL HUMAYDI HAS IN FACT BEEN IN TRIPOLI FOR PAST SEVERAL DAYS ADMINISTERING PROMOTION EXAMS TO POLICE OFFICERS.

2. THE AIM OF THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN IS PROBABLY TO CREATE A CLIMATE OF INSECURITY AND TENSION IN LIBYA WHICH WILL TEND TO FEED ON ITSELF, AND JUDGING FROM THE NUMBER OF RUMORS FLYING ABOUT TRIPOLI WHICH SEEM TO HAVE BEEN INDIRECTLY GENERATED BY EGYPTIAN PRESS AND RADIO REPORTS, THE CAMPAIGN IS HAVING SOME SUCCESS.

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3. THIS IS FORCING THE REGIME TO ISSUE DENIALS OF PARTICULARLY TROUBLESOME STORIES. THUS IN REACTION TO FAR-FETCHED EGYPTIAN INSINUATIONS THAT THE DEATH OF RCC MEMBER AL-MAGARYEF IN A 1971 CAR CRASH WAS PLOTTED BY QADHAFI, THE FINDINGS OF THE COURT OF INQUIRY INTO THE MATTER WERE MADE PUBLIC AND PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS FOR THE FIRST TIME. (A REAR TIRE BLEW OUT, AND THE CAR, IN WHICH JALLUD WAS ALSO A PASSENGER, WAS GOING TOO FAST.) IN THE SAME WAY EGYPTIAN-INSPIRED RUMORS THAT JUNE 11 EXPLOSION IN TRIPOLI PORT WAS REALLY UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE QADHAFI FORCED REGIME TO PUBLISH FACSIMILE OF REPORT BY WEST GERMAN OUTSIDE EXPERTS ATTRIBUTING EXPLOSION TO A WW II BOMB. OF COURSE, IT IS REGIME'S PHOBIA ABOUT SECRECY WHICH MAKES IT AN EASY TARGET FOR THIS SORT OF THING.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PROPAGANDA, PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TRIPOL00836
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750259-0353
From: TRIPOLI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750717/aaaaaoxv.tel
Line Count: 76
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 CAIRO 7333
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPTIAN PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST QADHAFI
TAGS: PFOR, EG, LY, (QADHAFI, MU'AMMAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006